

Excerpts from *The Revolutionary Army*, by Zou Rong<sup>1</sup>

Sweep away millennia of despotism in all its forms, throw off millennia of slavishness, annihilate the five million and more of the furry and horned Manchu race, cleanse ourselves of 260 years of harsh and unremitting pain, so that the soil of the Chinese subcontinent is made immaculate, and the descendants of the Yellow Emperor<sup>2</sup> will all become Washingtons. Then they will return from the dead to life again, they will emerge from the Eighteen Levels of Hell and rise to the Thirty Three mansions of Heaven, in all their magnificence and richness to arrive at their zenith, the unique and incomparable of goals--revolution. How sublime is revolution, how majestic!

The enormous privileges given the nobles, the harm done to the livelihood of the people, the taxes illegally imposed, the extorted public debt and the twice levied ship tax: such were the reasons why the English Parliament would not submit to King Charles, and why revolution was advocated. The excessive use of patents of nobility leading to the widening of the gulf between noble and base, rich and poor.; the abandonment of the principle of the protection of the people; the levies exacted beyond reason; these were the reasons why French militants and men of high principles did not shrink from the terms of insurrection and sedition; such were the causes of the French Revolution. Heavy tea duties, the forcible imposition of a printing tax without the consent of the legislative assembly, the quartering of troops on civilians: such were the themes of the criticisms leveled at the British. Thereafter, the American flag of revolt floated on Bunker Hill; such were the reasons why revolution was advocated so widely until independence was finally achieved.

I do not begrudge repeating over and over again that internally we are slaves of the Manchus and suffering from their tyranny, externally we are being harassed by the Powers, and we are doubly enslaved. The reason why our sacred Han race, descendants of the Yellow emperor, should support revolutionary independence, arises precisely from the question of whether our race will go under and be exterminated.

With the rapid advances in science, the superstitious doctrine whereby a man becomes an emperor through the gift of heaven and the spirits can be destroyed.

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<sup>1</sup> Born in the Sichuan province in south-central China in 1885, Zou gradually became interested in Western ideas, and went to Japan to study in 1901, where he was exposed to radical revolutionary and anti-Manchu ideas. This tract, published in Shanghai in 1903, is his most important. He intentionally lived in a foreign concession in Shanghai, where the Qing government could not execute him, but he was put in prison for two years for publishing this tract, before he died in 1905, at the young age of 21.

<sup>2</sup> The Yellow Emperor is a legendary figure ruling China in the 2600s BC.

With the rapid advance in world civilization, the system whereby the rule of a single man in a despotic form of government can cover the whole country may be overthrown. With the rapid advances in wisdom, everybody will be able to enjoy his or her natural rights. If today our great Han people are to throw off the bonds of the Manchus, to retrieve all the rights we have lost, and is to take its place among world powers (for we wish to preserve in its entirety our natural equality of status and independence), we cannot avoid carrying out a revolution and safeguarding our right to independence.

- Not to allow any alien race to lay their hands on the least rights of our China
- Any obligations subordinating people to the Manchus are one and all annulled
- First, to overthrow the barbaric government set up by the Manchus in Beijing.
- To expel the Manchus settled in China or kill them in order to revenge ourselves
- To kill the emperor set up by the Manchus as a warning to the myriad generations that despotic government is not to be revived.
- To oppose any intervention directed either by Chinese nationals or from foreign soil against Chinese revolutionary independence
- To set up a central government, which will act as a general body to run affairs.
- In each area and province a deputy to a general assemble is to be elected by vote in public elections. From these deputies, one is to be elected by vote to serve as provisional president to represent the whole country A vice-president is also to be elected, and all chou and hsien [districts in China] are to elect a number of deputies.
- The whole population, whether male or female, are citizens.
- All men have the duty to serve as citizen soldiers
- Everybody has the duty of bearing the burden of taxation.
- Everybody in the country, whether male or female, is equal. There is no distinction between upper and lower, base and noble.
- All inalienable rights are bestowed by nature.
- The freedom to live and all other privileges are natural rights.
- Freedoms, such as that of speech, thought, the press, etc. cannot be infringed on.
- All rights must be defended. The government which must be set up by public agreement, must employ all the powers granted purely to defend popular rights.
- If, at any time, the actions of a government lead to an infraction of people's rights, they have the right to carry out a revolution, and overthrow the old government to retrieve their peace and contentment.
- Once these have been obtained, the question of rights must be publicly discussed and a new government set up. This also is to be a right of the people.
- To settle the name of the country as the Republic of China